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Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

Tokelau

Working paper prepared by the Secretariat

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Note: The information contained in the present working paper has been derived from public sources, including those of the territorial Government, and from information transmitted to the Secretary-General by the administering Power under Article 73 e of the Charter of the United Nations. Information was transmitted by the administering Power on 28 January 2014. Further details are contained in previous working papers, available from www.un.org/en/decolonization/workingpapers.shtml.

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The Territory at a glance

Territory: Tokelau is a Non-Self-Governing Territory under the Charter administered by New Zealand.

Representative of administrative Power: Administrator Jonathan Kings.

Geography: Tokelau comprises three small atolls: Fakaofo, Nukunonu and Atafu. Each atoll comprises strips of land up to 200 m wide and not more than 5 m above sea level. Samoa, located 480 km to the south, is the nearest sizeable neighbour and the principal point of contact for Tokelau with the outside world.

Land area: 12.2 km².

Exclusive economic zone: 318,990 km².[a]

Population: 1,411 (October 2011 census), as follows: Atafu — 482, Fakaofo — 490, Nukunonu — 397 and Samoa — 42 (Tokelau Public Service employees and their immediate families). Over 6,800 Tokelauans live in New Zealand. As New Zealand citizens, Tokelauans may also reside in Australia.

Ethnic composition: Tokelauans are Polynesians with linguistic, family and cultural links with Samoa.

Languages: Tokelauan. English and Samoan are also widely used.

Capital: None. Each atoll has its own administrative centre.

Head of territorial Government: Ulu-o-Tokelau. The position rotates among the leader of each atoll on an annual basis.

Main political parties: None.

Elections: Held in January every third year. The last election was held on 23 January 2014; the next one is due to be held in January 2017. Representation in the General Fono currently stands at Atafu (7 delegates), Nukunonu (6) and Fakaofo (7).

Legislature: The unicameral General Fono, a 20-member legislature.

Economy: The principal source of revenue is assistance provided by New Zealand. Additional revenue is generated by fisheries licence fees and sales of copra, postage stamps, souvenir coins and handicrafts.

Monetary unit: New Zealand dollar ($NZ).

Gross domestic product per capita: US$ 1,007 (2001-2008 estimates).

Brief history: Originally inhabited by Polynesians from surrounding islands, Tokelau became a British protectorate in 1889, and in 1925, administration was transferred to New Zealand. By the Tokelau Act 1948, sovereignty over Tokelau was transferred to New Zealand.

[a] Exclusive economic zone data from J. D. Bell, J. E. Johnson and A. J. Hobday, *Vulnerability of Tropical Pacific Fisheries and Aquaculture to Climate Change* (Noumea, Secretariat of the Pacific Community, 2011). Available from www.spc.int/climate-change/fisheries/assessment/e-book.

I. Constitutional and political developments

A. Local self-governance

1. As reported in previous working papers on the question of Tokelau (see A/AC.109/2002/6, A/AC.109/2003/10, A/AC.109/2004/8, A/AC.109/2005/3, A/AC.109/2006/10, A/AC.109/2007/11, A/AC.109/2008/1, A/AC.109/2009/2, A/AC.109/2010/3, A/AC.109/2011/3, A/AC.109/2012/1 and A/AC.109/2013/2), the current process of constitutional development stems from the 1998 decision of the General Fono (the national representative body of Tokelau) to endorse a comprehensive report entitled "Modern house of Tokelau", which addressed the core issue that faced Tokelau in creating a constitutional framework that suited an atoll- or village-based self-governing community that respected traditional decision-making customs.

2. In accordance with the terms of the 1998 "Modern house of Tokelau" report, General Fono delegates are now elected on the basis of proportional village representation with delegates elected through universal village suffrage, rather than a system of equal village representation with delegates appointed by the respective Village Councils, as was previously the case. In 2004, further decisions were made on the method of appointment of the Chair of the General Fono and on the role and responsibilities of the six-person Council of Ongoing Government, which is the executive Government when the General Fono is not in session. The Council consists of three Faipule (representative of each village) and three Pulenuku (mayor of each village). The position of Ulu-o-Tokelau, or Head of Government, rotates annually among the three Faipule. In February 2013, the Faipule for Nukunonu took over as Ulu. In February 2014, the Faipule for Atafu is expected to rotate into the position.

3. In its most recent election on 23 January 2014, Tokelau elected its new General Fono (Parliament), which represents the three atolls of Tokelau (Fakaofo, Atafu and Nukunonu). Two of the three sitting Faipule and one of the three Pulenuku lost their seats. In all, 9 of the 20 positions in the General Fono went to new candidates. Three of these positions are held by women, who each represent the Fatupaepae (Women's Committee) on each atoll. Overall the composition of the General Fono is that of a younger, less traditional Tokelau.

4. Since 2004, the three Village Councils have taken full responsibility for all village public services. That decision emanated from the Modern House of Tokelau approach, whereby the traditional Council of Elders on each atoll should serve as the foundation for any future governance structure. Under that arrangement, the three Village Councils would delegate authority to the General Fono for activities that needed to be handled at the national level (see A/AC.109/2005/3). The New Zealand official with principal responsibility for relations with Tokelau is the Administrator of Tokelau, who is based in Wellington and is appointed by the New Zealand Minister for Foreign Affairs.

5. Jonathan Kings is the current Administrator of Tokelau and works from within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade in the Special Relations Unit, which is responsible for New Zealand's relationship with Tokelau (as well as with Niue). The Unit is staffed by officers of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. A member of the Tokelau Public Service works in the Office of the Administrator.

B. Referendum process

6. In 2003, the General Fono took a formal decision, with the support of all three Village Councils, to endorse self-government in free association with New Zealand as the choice to be actively explored with the New Zealand Government. In August 2005, the General Fono approved a draft constitution as the basis for the proposed act of self-determination, as well as the text of a draft treaty of free association between Tokelau and New Zealand. In November 2005, the New Zealand Cabinet gave its formal approval. The so-called referendum package, consisting of the draft treaty and the draft constitution, was to form the basis of the referendum on self-determination. In line with a decision by the General Fono, an overall majority of two thirds of the valid votes cast was required for a change to the status of Tokelau.

7. The first referendum on self-determination was held sequentially in Apia and on the three atolls from 11 to 15 February 2006 (see A/AC.109/2006/20). The outcome of the referendum fell short of the required two-thirds majority, with 60 per cent of valid Tokelauan votes cast in favour of self-government in free association with New Zealand. The United Nations, which formally monitored the referendum, deemed the process credible and reflective of the will of the people of Tokelau. A representative of the Special Committee on Decolonization, accompanied by a Political Affairs Officer of the Department of Political Affairs of the Secretariat, also observed the referendum process.

8. In August 2006, the General Fono voted to hold a second referendum on Tokelauan self-determination in late 2007. The proposed constitution and the draft treaty, commonly referred to as the self-determination package, were to be the same and the legal threshold for acceptance of the proposal would remain at a two-thirds majority.

9. The second referendum was held from 20 to 24 October 2007. The result, with 64.4 per cent in favour, was again below the two-thirds threshold, thereby leaving the status of the Territory unchanged (see A/AC.109/2007/19). As with the first referendum, the United Nations formally monitored the voting, with representatives of the Special Committee on Decolonization and the Department of Political Affairs present as observers.

10. Following the results of the second referendum, the General Fono requested the Government of New Zealand to keep on the table the entire self-determination package (namely, the draft treaty and draft constitution that had been agreed upon and had served as the foundation for the previous ballots). The Council for the Ongoing Government noted that Tokelau could in the future change the two-thirds majority threshold for the referendum, but should put in place measures to ensure that a threshold was supported by a clear majority in each village to guarantee unity. The Council for the Ongoing Government also noted Tokelau's strong commitment to self-determination and its wish to have a constitution, albeit one that did not encompass the free association self-government provisions.

11. The outcomes of the referendums, neither of which reached the threshold of support set by Tokelau's General Fono for a change of status, have been acknowledged and accepted by New Zealand. As a follow-up to the 2007 referendum result, the then Prime Minister of New Zealand met with Tokelau's leaders in February 2008 to discuss the next steps in the New Zealand-Tokelau relationship. It was agreed that a "pause" should be taken in Tokelau's self-determination efforts and that, in the meantime, Tokelau would focus on meeting its basic needs. This remains the situation.

II. Economic conditions

A. General economic overview

12. Tokelau faces major constraints on its economic growth, including such natural disadvantages as small size, isolation, wide spread of the atolls, lack of natural resources and natural disasters (such as cyclones). Tokelau's economic stability has so far been made possible by the high levels of assistance provided by the administering Power. With the continued assistance of New Zealand, the Council for the Ongoing Government of Tokelau intends to maintain its focus on implementing various priority projects relating to infrastructure, the delivery of core services and shipping; developing the villages; and strengthening the General Fono, the Council for the Ongoing Government of Tokelau and the Tokelau Public Service.

13. Tokelau has a unique combination of traditional and modern income resource streams. With Government funding, many villagers are paid regularly for various village duties ranging from construction and boat-loading to assistance to the General Fono and other public entities. As part of the new Tokelau fisheries policy aimed at maximizing the economic benefits from the sustainable use of its exclusive economic zone (EEZ), Tokelau joined the Vessel Day Scheme, a mechanism allowing vessel owners to purchase and trade days fishing at sea in places subject to the Nauru Agreement. The scheme is used to constrain and reduce catches of target tuna species and increase the rate of return from fishing activities through access fees paid by distant water fishing nations. At the request of Tokelau, the Administrator has completed all formalities in order to manage the EEZ for the next three years, until Tokelau can take this over.

14. Traditional and communal values and practices play a key role in contributing to a state of general well-being and equity in the Territory, as evidenced by the *inati* system and the importance attached to upholding the concept of the family and/or the extended family. The tradition of *inati* requires the deposit at a central location of food and produce, which are then apportioned by the distributors on the basis of "share groups". The principle provides for a secure distribution system that addresses the needs of every member of the community, including the elderly, widows, single parents and children.

B. Assistance by the administering Power to Tokelau

15. In 2011, New Zealand and Tokelau signed a Joint Commitment for Development, which set out joint priorities for the following five years. The focus for development assistance remains securing a viable transport solution, developing a strong fisheries resource and improving health and education standards. Both Tokelau and New Zealand have reaffirmed their commitment to activities and projects that can be viably established and maintained.

16. Assistance is provided through budget support and through specific projects. New Zealand budget support for Tokelau for the 2012/13 financial year was $NZ 11.7 million. Key projects include transport (charter of the *PB Matua* and the design of a long-term shipping solution); renewable energy; and ship-to-shore equipment and infrastructure. Taking into account budget support and specific projects, total funding for 2013/14 is estimated to be in the vicinity of $NZ 30 million.

17. The Tokelau International Trust Fund, formally established in November 2004, is designed to provide intergenerational security and an independent source of income to Tokelau in the future. With contributions from Australia, New Zealand, Tokelau and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the level of the Fund now stands at approximately $NZ 75.2 million (estimated as at November 2013).

C. Transport and communications

18. Tokelau has no airstrips and its main transportation option is provided by regular passenger and cargo services between Apia and Tokelau, primarily on the *PB Matua*, which was chartered by the Administrator of Tokelau in 2012. Additional charters by larger vessels are occasionally funded to meet the transport needs of Tokelau. Recognizing the quality of the transport service linking Tokelau's atolls and providing contact with Samoa lies at the heart of its ongoing viability, New Zealand, as the administering Power, is constructing a new ferry that will carry up to 60 passengers and essential cargo. The ferry is based on specifications designed to meet the specific needs of the people of Tokelau. It is highly efficient, and will meet the highest international passenger safety standards. It is expected to meet the needs of Tokelau for the next 25 years. New Zealand is also assisting Tokelau to ensure the safe and efficient transfer of passengers and cargo from ship to shore. This includes the provision of new barges, safety equipment, training and upgrades to wharf infrastructure.

19. The telecommunications networks (telephone and Internet) of Tokelau are slow and perform poorly. There is no mobile phone network. New Zealand is working with the World Bank to undertake a comprehensive assessment of Tokelau's telecommunication infrastructure, along with its governance and management, with a view to assisting Tokelau to seek the best solution to improve its telecommunications. This is expected to have wide benefits, including in education, health, governance and economic development.

D. Power supply

20. In 2012, Tokelau became the first nation in the world to use only renewable energy following the completion of the Tokelau Renewable Energy Project, funded by the Government of New Zealand. A renewable energy system comprising a large array of solar panels, home solar panels, solar hot-water systems and generators running on biofuel derived from coconut oil was installed, making Tokelau entirely reliant on renewable energy for its electricity supply.

21. As a Pacific Island highly influenced by climate change, Tokelau sees its lead in renewable energy as an example to the developed world. It is expected that the country will generate savings on diesel of around $NZ 1 million annually.

III. Social conditions

A. General

22. In May 2012, Statistics New Zealand and the Tokelau Statistics Unit released the final outcome of the five-yearly population census held on 18 October 2011. The main findings of the 2011 Tokelau Census of Population and Dwellings were detailed in the previous working paper (see A/AC.109/2013/2).

23. According to the Tokelau National Statistics Office, a population count was undertaken in December 2013, primarily to collect the number of de jure usual residents in order to satisfy the requirements of the Constitution of Tokelau. A count of the population has to be undertaken in the year prior to a national election, in order to determine the number of delegates that can be elected for the General Fono. The final population counts showed that the de jure usually resident population was 1,383; the usually resident population present on the night of the count was 1,110; and the usually resident population absent from Tokelau on the night of the count was 273 (comprising 47 Tokelau public service employees and their immediate families based in Apia, and 226 people who normally live in Tokelau but were overseas on the night of the count). The population count definitions can be found in the previous working paper (see A/AC.109/2013/2).

B. Education

24. Under the Tokelau compulsory education system, primary and secondary education is available to everyone up to the age of 16. There are three schools on Tokelau, one on each atoll. As one of the owners of the University of the South Pacific (USP), Tokelau has access to a distance-learning foundation course run by the University's educational telecommunications system through a USP campus located on Atafu. In spite of significant funding for education over many years, education standards on the atolls remain relatively low. This was recently confirmed in a report of the New Zealand Government Education Review Office. This is a key reason why significant numbers of families leave the atolls to seek improved educational opportunities for their children in New Zealand, Samoa and elsewhere. A major infrastructure renewal programme is ongoing in Tokelau, which includes the provision of new schools in Atafu and Fakaofo. Efforts have also been devoted to curriculum development, the training of principals and senior staff and the extension of secondary schooling in 2009 to cover year 13. However, following the Education Review Office report, New Zealand is considering how it might further support improvement in Education standards.

25. According to the review of the Secretariat of the Pacific Board for educational assessment conducted for the Secretariat of the Pacific Community in 2013, Tokelau is challenged by its size and remoteness in ensuring the delivery of education, and the teaching workforce is largely untrained and very mobile, which impedes the sustainability of teacher professional development. The report also highlighted other key issues such as Tokelau's limited connectivity, which limits online and videoconferencing options for study and professional development, and the limited course offerings for Tokelau students in the USP preliminary course.

C. Health care

26. The provision of adequate health services to the populations of three dispersed atolls remains a major challenge for Tokelau. Each atoll has a basic health centre that is staffed and equipped to deliver core medical care and related services. Considerable attention and funding are devoted to this core area of Tokelau's needs. As part of a major infrastructure renewal programme, a new health centre on Nukunonu was recently completed, and is expected to make a strong contribution towards improved health outcomes.

27. The major non-local sources of contributions to health care are the Government of New Zealand, the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), as well as the Government of Australia and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community. The priorities of the national health plan, which is directly linked to the Tokelau National Strategic Plan 2010-2015 are: (a) healthy islands and communities; (b) healthy lifestyles; (c) development of health partnerships; (d) development of accessible primary health-care services; (e) successful community participation; and (f) development and improvement of the health-service system.

28. According to data from WHO, while the overall health status is reasonably good, changes have been observed in the past 20 years. Non-communicable diseases, namely overweight and obesity, are the major threat, with cerebrovascular and cardiovascular diseases being the leading causes of death. Obesity is common and is attributed to diet and physical inactivity. There is an observable diet shift away from local foods towards imported foods. Tobacco and alcohol consumption are relatively high among the adult population and more prominent in males. The estimated smoking prevalence among adults in 2011 was 43 per cent. There are initiatives under way to improve education on the atolls around diet. Tokelau health officials are currently conducting a health review, which is hoped will lead to further improvements.

29. Tokelau has zero infant and maternal mortality owing to early referral. Antenatal care coverage and immunization coverage for child immunization is 100 per cent. Screening programmes are in place for early detection and treatment of important health issues (cervical cancer, breast screening). The proportion of the population with access to improved sanitation facilities is 93 per cent. Access to improved drinking-water sources is available to 97 per cent of the population.

30. In November 2012, WHO issued the WHO Multi-Country Cooperation Strategy for the Pacific 2013-2017, aimed at addressing the three common threats to the health of Pacific peoples. The strategy identifies common challenges in the Pacific region, outlines steps to address them and identifies five priority areas. For the first time, technical cooperation with each of the countries and territories in the Pacific is described.

31. In the case of Tokelau, four strategic priorities for collaboration between WHO and the territorial Government were identified: reduce the effects of non-communicable diseases through a variety of interventions such as food import control, implementing the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control and implementing the WHO package of essential non-communicable disease interventions; increase health sector focus on climate change, supporting the health

sector in implementing health system strengthening activities to address key climate-sensitive health risks as part of a suite of climate change adaptations in Tokelau; develop human health resources for the future to ensure qualified staff for three Tokelau atolls; and create sustainable policies for the retention and development of health workers to maintain adequate levels of staffing in the health programmes.

IV. External relations

32. As set out in paragraphs 9 and 10 of the Principles of Partnership statement, Tokelau as a Non-Self-Governing Territory has insufficient international legal personality to enter into formal international legal obligations as a State in its own right. New Zealand is responsible for entering into any such obligations on behalf of Tokelau, after consulting with Tokelau as to its wishes. Tokelau participates in regional and international organizations in its own right to the extent that those organizations provide for such participation.

33. Tokelau is seeking to grow its engagement with regional and international organizations. Tokelau is a member of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, the Pacific Community Coastal Fisheries Programme, the Council of the University of the South Pacific, the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme and the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency. It holds observer status with the Pacific Islands Forum, and is an associate member of the Pacific Community Applied Geoscience Commission. Tokelau is also an associate member of WHO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). In addition to its relationship with New Zealand, Samoa is an important bilateral contact for Tokelau. Tokelau attended the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in June 2012.

V. Future status of the Territory

A. Position of territorial Government

34. Speaking at the 2013 Caribbean regional seminar in Quito, the Ulu-o-Tokelau noted that Tokelau was still not eligible for many of the United Nations funds available under the small island developing States development programmes, such as the Global Environment Facility (GEF). Tokelau had not been able to obtain membership of the Alliance of Small Islands States, the International Renewable Energy Agency and small island developing States. Further, the Ulu-o-Tokelau presented two suggestions: (i) the Special Committee on Decolonization should actively explore the needs of each of the territories and determine whether their capacity to engage internationally was limited or compromised by virtue of their current political status; (ii) the Special Committee on Decolonization should revisit the three self-determination options in relation to the wishes of the Territories as to the type of government they would aspire to under an act of self-determination. He noted that all three options had their difficulties and that it would be worthwhile for the Territories to understand these options and the strategies that may be used to manage them, and hence provide greater incentive to move towards greater autonomy.

35. Speaking at the June 2013 session of the Special Committee, the Ulu-o-Tokelau reiterated the position of Tokelau on seeking the support of the Special Committee to explore options to allow territories, fully supported by the administering Powers, to fully engage United Nations bodies such as the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, GEF and others (e.g., the Alliance of Small Islands States, the International Renewable Energy Agency and small island developing States). The Ulu-o-Tokelau believed that the specific provision in General Assembly resolution 2625 (XXV) supported this aspiration. He stated that Tokelau sought the ability to be able to improve the quality of life for its people; it did not ignore New Zealand's support, but wished to reduce the burden Tokelau may pose to it. In the light of the financial challenges of New Zealand, Tokelau wished to work closely with other development partners, such as UNDP, UNESCO, WHO, UNICEF and FAO and key regional organizations. He further briefed the Special Committee on the four pillars of the Tokelau National Strategic Plan: governance, infrastructure development, human development and sustainable development. He noted that Tokelau was examining and developing a model of government structure that fit the culture and addressed the contemporary landscape. The Ulu-o-Tokelau also informed the Special Committee about the approval of the national symbol, which, along with the constitution, the national anthem and the national flag, was driven and ratified by the people of Tokelau. The constitutional consultations to discuss the structures and functions of the Government had been concluded and their outcome would be submitted to the Constitution Committee. The issues discussed included: acknowledging the traditional role of the senior elders (Kauhauatea) within the parliamentary system; the introduction of a national election system; the tenure and appointment of the Ulu-o-Tokelau; the composition of the Cabinet or the Council; and the introduction to a new approach to the members of the Parliament or the Fono.

B. Position of administering Power

36. As the administering Power for Tokelau, New Zealand has continued to maintain and provide all appropriate support for Tokelau efforts to determine the will of its people for a possible change of status. New Zealand is appreciative of the inevitable resource and capacity constraints of Tokelau as a small atoll-based community and envisages long-term support for Tokelau. Successive Administrators and representatives of New Zealand to the United Nations have placed on record before the Special Committee and the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) full information about New Zealand support for Tokelau on this issue. This attitude towards the needs and aspirations of the people of Tokelau has been favourably acknowledged by those Committees on many occasions.

37. Addressing the Special Committee on 21 June 2013, Jonathan Kings, Administrator of Tokelau, underscored the pledge of New Zealand to work with the Special Committee to provide relevant and timely information on Tokelau. He recalled a referendum on self-determination in which the people of Tokelau signaled that the timing for transition to self-government was not yet right and stressed that core services had to be delivered first in order for conditions to be met for another referendum to be held. New Zealand remained fully committed to work with Tokelau and to overcome the problems of smallness, isolation and lack of resources.

A significant step had recently been taken in achieving safe transport for Tokelau, a critical service providing a "life-line" to the Territory. He also noted that New Zealand remained the largest bilateral donor to Tokelau, which amounted to 75 per cent of the budget of Tokelau, and highlighted the Tokelau renewable energy projects and the construction of two new schools and hospital buildings. Additionally, it was important to acknowledge the assistance of the wider international community and the United Nations, particularly WHO and UNDP.

38. Addressing the Fourth Committee on 11 October 2013, the representative of New Zealand stated that the focus of the relationship between New Zealand and Tokelau had been on addressing the core services of the people living on the three atolls, following the decision by the leaders of Tokelau and New Zealand that there should be an appreciable period of time before Tokelau undertakes any further act of self-determination. New Zealand was Tokelau's largest donor, with economic support amounting to 75 per cent of the Territory budget. He further noted that fishing revenues to Tokelau had risen significantly through the efforts of Tokelaun fisheries officials. At the request of Tokelau, the Administrator of Tokelau had taken on responsibility for managing Tokelau's exclusive economic zone. A solar photovoltaic renewable energy project had reduced diesel consumption by more than 80 per cent, with sustainable electricity meeting energy needs. Completion of the infrastructure development projects, which include two schools and a new hospital, would provide much improved health and education services. The assistance provided by the wider international community and members of the United Nations system, particularly UNDP, working through its regional office in Samoa, and WHO was also acknowledged. It was pointed out that the Governor-General of New Zealand, as a symbol of the enduring ties between Tokelau and New Zealand, presented the Badge of the General Fono of Tokelau to the Ulu-o-Tokelau, which depicts the national symbol of Tokelau, the Tuluma (a traditional Tokelauan carved wooden fishing tackle box). He concluded by underlining that the relationship between Tokelau and New Zealand continued to be framed by its strength and mutual respect. New Zealand remained respectful of the wishes of the people of Tokelau, and would continue to work closely with them as they chartered their own path and worked towards greater autonomy.

C. Consideration of the question by the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

39. Speaking before the Special Committee on Decolonization on 10 June 2013, the representative of Papua New Guinea acknowledged the positive and continuing exemplary efforts in providing updated information to the United Nations by the Government of New Zealand as the administering Power with regard to Tokelau. This information and that from other relevant stakeholders, including the people of Tokelau, formed the basis of the draft resolution on the Territory which Papua New Guinea intended to sponsor at the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly and to seek the support of the wider United Nations membership.

40. On 21 June 2013, the representative of Papua New Guinea, introducing the draft resolution on Tokelau (document A/AC.109/2013/L.15), pointed out that the presence at the meeting of both the Ulu-o-Tokelau and the administering Power

demonstrated yet again the willingness of both sides to work together with the Special Committee and the United Nations in general, to ensure the future well-being of the Tokelau people. Indeed, the ongoing excellent manner in which Tokelau and New Zealand had conducted their relationship was a "beacon of hope" showing what could be achieved when there was mutual understanding and respect between the Non-Self-Governing Territory and the administering Power. Urging Committee Members to support the draft resolution on Tokelau, he called it balanced, forward looking and fairly representative of the well-being of the Tokelau people.

D. Consideration of the question by the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

41. Addressing the Special Political and Decolonization Committee on 11 October 2013, the representative of Papua New Guinea, also speaking on behalf of the Melanesian Spearhead Group, noted the continuing progress in the self-determination process in Tokelau. For its part, the representative of Palau also stated that the approach taken by New Zealand in helping the people of Tokelau towards self-determination was a good one and should be emulated by all administering Powers.

E. Action taken by the General Assembly

42. At its 65th plenary meeting, on 11 December 2013, the General Assembly adopted without a vote resolution 68/94 on the question of Tokelau.

43. Under the operative part of that resolution, the General Assembly:

1. *Acknowledges* the decision of the General Fono in 2008 that consideration of any future act of self-determination by Tokelau will be deferred and that New Zealand and Tokelau will devote renewed effort and attention to ensuring that essential services and infrastructure on the atolls of Tokelau are enhanced and strengthened, thereby ensuring an enhanced quality of life for the people of Tokelau;

2. *Welcomes* the progress made towards the devolution of power to the three taupulega (village councils) since 2004, and notes that further discussion is planned on the recommendations of the report on the devolution review, compiled in 2012;

3. *Notes* that Tokelau and New Zealand remain firmly committed to the ongoing development of Tokelau for the long-term benefit of the people of Tokelau, with particular emphasis on the further development of facilities on each atoll that meet their current requirements;

4. *Acknowledges* the adoption by Tokelau of its National Strategic Plan for 2010-2015 and that the Joint Commitment for Development between Tokelau and New Zealand 2011-2015 will focus on a viable transportation arrangement, infrastructure development, human resources capacity and the strengthening of governance;

5. *Also acknowledges* the ongoing and consistent commitment of New Zealand to meeting the social and economic requirements of the people of

Tokelau, including the completion of the Tokelau Renewable Energy Project and a new shipping charter service, as well as the support and cooperation of the United Nations Development Programme and the World Health Organization;

6. *Further acknowledges* Tokelau's need for continued support from the international community and Tokelau's desire to be able to gain access to resources from international organizations, such as the Global Environment Facility, and for active membership in such organizations as the Alliance of Small Island States and the International Renewable Energy Agency, in line with General Assembly resolution 2625 (XXV) of 24 October 1970;

7. *Recalls with satisfaction* the establishment and operation of the Tokelau International Trust Fund to support the ongoing needs of Tokelau, and calls upon Member States and international and regional agencies to contribute to the Fund and thereby lend practical support to Tokelau in overcoming the problems of smallness, isolation and lack of resources;

8. *Welcomes* the cooperative attitude of the other States and territories in the region towards Tokelau and their support for its economic and political aspirations and its increasing participation in regional and international affairs;

9. *Calls upon* the administering Power and United Nations agencies to continue to provide assistance to Tokelau as it further develops;

10. *Welcomes* the actions taken by the administering Power to transmit to the Secretary-General under Article 73 *e* of the Charter of the United Nations information regarding the political, economic and social situation of Tokelau;

11. *Also welcomes* the commitment of both Tokelau and New Zealand to continue to work together in the interests of Tokelau and its people;

12. *Commends* the completion of the first phase of the Tokelau Renewable Energy Project with the support of the administering Power;

13. *Requests* the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples to continue to examine the question of the Non-Self-Governing Territory of Tokelau and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session.

44. At the same meeting, the General Assembly also adopted resolution 68/97, on the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, paragraph 6 of which refers to Tokelau.